LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES

Waid & Kitson Leadin' the Legion

The Legion of Super-Heroes has seen a virtual legion of creators during its almost-fifty-year history—but rarely has the teen super-team relaunched with this sort of star talent. Beginning later this month, ***The Legion of Super-Heroes*** will rejoin the DC lineup with a new series and a new pair of creators: *Mark Waid* and *Barry Kitson*, who first proved their science fiction skills on *Empire* before taking on the first teen super-team of the Silver Age.

The Legion's career spans almost a half-century, but that career has seen its ups and downs; in recent years, the series has failed to break out of its niche and claim an audience the size of such series as *Teen Titans* and *X-Men*. What's the most vital aspect of the *Legion* concept that keeps it going, and what's problems have led to its stumbling in some of its revamps? "I think the notion of independent youth—kids who are arrogant enough to tell off the adults when they're wrong, but who have the goods and the guts to back it up—is an enormous part of the core strength of ***Legion of Super-Heroes,***" Waid told *CSN*. "In the past, some of the stumbling blocks in the ***Legion's*** publishing path haven't been anyone's fault, but rather that, somehow, fandom gestalt somehow turned the phrase 'rich history' into a pejorative. ***The Legion of Super-Heroes***—unfairly, I think—got typed as a series where you had to know fifty years of continuity to jump in, and something drastic needed to be done to refute that charge."

What drastic change in approach did Waid and Kitson have in mind? Does this series starting fresh, basically from Day One of the Legion's career? And how does Waid and Kitson's ***Legion*** resemble—and differ from—what readers have seen before? "It *does* start fresh, but *not* from Day One," Waid said. "The Legion is an active force in the galaxy, and *for the love of God, man*, no one *ever* needs to see that familiar but way-too-dated origin story again. (For those out of the loop: The founding Legionnaires meet on the *only* starship in all of science fiction history where you're asked to put your tray tables and seatbacks to an upright position before landing.)

"The Legion, if we play it right, is resonant to the 'Future Knights of the Round Table' take that was part of the Legion's appeal, but the look is all-new. The headquarters building has its own origin and ambiance, the costumes are new, the powers have been tweaked here and there—and wait until you see what the Flight Rings do now!"

While some have argued that there are too many Legionnaires to make the team accessible to newcomers, Waid disagrees. "It's called *Legion* of Super-Heroes, for Pete's sake! Seven guys on a team *ain't* a Legion. Besides, aren't there more X-Men than Legionnaires now?"

With a cast this large and a story this vast, Waid and Kitson need more room to tell their story—and DC was happy to oblige. Each issue of the new Legion of Super-Heroes will weigh in at forty pages for the price of thirty-two, giving Waid & Kitson thirty pages of story and art in each issue. That's 25% more content for the same price—and that's good news indeed!

Some ***Legion*** series have been optimistic, while others have had a cynical, dystopian view; where does this series fall? "Optimistic but with an edge," Waid said. "There's some dark truth behind the seemingly utopian world of the 31st century."

Every reboot requires some streamlining—and that means that some older elements don't necessarily survive in the relaunch. Are there any elements of the Legion canon that Waid and Kitson are disposing of? "Not without much debate and careful consideration. *Everything* is someone's *favorite* thing about the Legion. That said, we're still arm-wrestling over the fate of Matter-Eater Lad..."

Waid describes the new ***Legion of Super-Heroes*** as "faithful enough to what's always been the heart of the series to not 'break' it, but new enough to be a vision of the future as seen through a modern lens instead of one forged in the 1950s." As for Kitson's visual contribution, Waid assures readers that "you've never seen a 31st century like his."

What aspects of the new series does Waid think will most excite veteran fans of ***The Legion***? And what are he and Kitson doing to make it accessible to newcomers? "Making it accessible is easy—it's a fresh restart. The new Legion has the same relationship to its historical predecessors as, say, the Silver Age Flash had to the Golden Age Flash. Kids who picked up the first Hal Jordan Green Lantern story years ago weren't expected to know Alan Scott's history, and so it is with our book—the first issue, much like the nine-cent ***Fantastic Four*** book I wrote, is a 'pilot episode,' hitting *all* the beats you need to know in order to enjoy the series."

As Waid sees it, the new Legion is "not a team—they're a *movement*, and more than that, we can't really say without spoiling the surprise.

"At its core, as always, the Legion is still an interplanetary, culturally diverse band of teenage super-heroes eager to leave the universe better than they found it. To that end, they'll be spending half their time battling assorted threats to the United Planets, fighting for justice and tolerance—and half their time simply learning to work together. The characters will drive everything. Political intrigue, astounding villains with chilling schemes, wild and bizarre threats to the universe – the more imaginative and futuristic the better, snapshots of societal change—all that's great, and ***Legion of Super-Heroes*** readers will get as much of that as they demand. But every story, every single story—whether it's the A plot, the B subplot, or the C sub-subplot—must always be about one or more Legionnaires and how what's happening for the next thirty or sixty or ninety pages is affecting them.

"I think the temptation with ***Legion***—and I've been guilty of it myself, particularly given such an vast array of science fiction tools with which to work—is to focus too much on a unique idea... and not enough on how that idea directly involves one—or several—of our heroes and sharpens our focus on him—or them..."

Waid acknowledges that the three founding members will remain crucial to the team. "They're vastly important," Waid said of Saturn Girl, Lighting Lad, and Cosmic Boy. "Indescribably important. But that doesn't mean you'll be seeing them. After that, we're still pinning down the membership, so even we're not 100% certain.."

While ***Legion*** and ***Empire*** are very different projects, they do have some aspects in common: both are science fiction adventures, and both have a large cast of characters. Did anything that Waid and Kitson did in ***Empire*** influence what they're doing here? "Structurally, yeah—the reminder that one of the best and liveliest ways to do a large-cast book is to figure out subplots for all the characters and then watch the sparks fly when those plots intercept one another."

How did the revamp come about? "DC approached us, which was flattering," Waid said. "DC knows that both Barry and I have a longtime love for the Legion. ***Legion*** editor *Steve Wacker*, who is a delight to work with, started the ball rolling, *Dan DiDio* added to its momentum, and ultimately *Paul Levitz* sat down with us, listened to our pitch, made some terrific suggestions, and gave our approach his full and invaluable blessing," Waid said. "Barry and I seem to be on DC's short list of creators who are very respectful of their characters, but who are eager to find new ways to interpret them for tomorrow's audience instead of just yesterday's."

For Waid, it was especially important that *Paul Levitz* approve of their plan for the team, "because besides writing more ***Legion*** stories than anyone else alive, Paul wrote more *great* ***Legion*** stories than anyone ever."

Insofar as the Legion is concerned, Waid describes himself, first and foremost, as a fan. "Seriously, truly—probably as deeply as anyone alive outside of *Paul Levitz*... and even then, he and I would probably have to arm-wrestle for the title of Biggest Legion Fan... My love for the Legion is second only to my love for Superman, so being given the opportunity to re-think and re-imagine both properties for the 21st century has been a double-dream assignment."

Waid is no stranger to ***Legion*** reboots. "Remember, I was the first editor on the post-Levitz 'Five Years Later' era," Waid said. "Apparently, my designated destiny is to hop in a Time Bubble every few years with a dust cloth and a bucket of Formula 409 and go shine the Legion up and make 'em all minty-fresh. Man, I *love* my job!"

Legion of Super-Heroes #1, a $2.95 comic, is scheduled for December 29th release.

BY CLIFF BIGGERS (WITH MATT BRADY

Courtesy your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!

Comic Shop Newsarama

Produced by ***Comic Shop News*** in cooperation with *Matt Brady* and *newsarama.com*

DeMatteis & Ploog Have Stardust in Their Eyes

Back in *CSN #912*, we first told you about the upcoming series ***Stardust Kid*** by the *Abadazad* creative team of *J. M. DeMatteis & Mike Ploog*, which is slated to appear this spring from *Joe Pruett's* Desperado imprint at Image. Now DeMatteis has offered more info about the series' history and storyline.

"***Stardust Kid*** is an idea I've been nurturing since the late '80s," DeMatteis told ***Comic Shop Newsarama's Benjamin Ong Pang Kean***. "It was inspired by my son, who was a wide-eyed little squirt back then (he's twenty-four now!). I actually sold the series to DC. I thought the time was ripe for a smart, kid-friendly fantasy, the comic book equivalent of ***Narnia*** or ***Peter Pan***, and then bought it back when I realized that the market—which was skewing older and older—wouldn't support an all-ages project like ***Stardust Kid***. I've been toying with the story, on and off, ever since… playing with it in screenplay form, book form but something was always missing. That something turned out to be *Mike Ploog*.

"After CrossGen went into bankruptcy, Mike and I found ourselves in legal limbo with ***Abadazad***, waiting for our court case to resolve.

We decided that, rather than go stir crazy worrying and waiting, we'd create something new together, something that continued the spirit of ***Abadazad***—a literate, beautifully-illustrated fantasy for all ages. Something a parent and child can read, and enjoy, together.

"I shared some of the ***Stardust Kid*** material with Mike and we began to talk about it. My idea inspired Mike, who ran to the Ploog Archives and began barraging me with incredible drawings, creatures he'd been designing and stockpiling for years. Those drawings got my creative juices going and the story blossomed, transforming into something new and exciting that transcended my original intentions. The seeds of the original story are still there, but they've grown into a completely new form, sprouting off into unexpected directions."

Stardust Kid focuses on twelve-year-old Cody DiMarco and his best friend,Paul Brightfield. The bond between these two boys is deep, deeper than anyone could ever suspect. Unknown to anyone else except Cody, Paul isn't human. He is the last of The Old Ones, ancient elemental beings from The Time Before, when no Man walked the Earth and magic was a given.

One October night in Wilde Park, a massive cocoon burrows up out of the earth. There's something in there; something alive, malevolent... and angry. That same night, Paul vanishes—but not before leaving behind a book, ***The Stardust Kid***, for Cody. No, not so much a book as a doorway into a deep magic that the boy can neither grasp nor understand.

The being in the cocoon breaks free and takes form as The Dark Woman, who moves into the old abandoned Cain Mansion. Soon, creatures from The Time Before begin sprouting in her midnight garden—but these are dark, twisted versions of these ancient beings, utterly corrupted by the Dark Woman's hate.

In time, the entire neighborhood is cut off from the outside world, transformed into a savage, primeval land populated by trolls, elves, and elementals, unicorns, centaurs and dozens of other fantastical creatures. All the humans in the area are transformed, as well... except for Cody, his little sister K.M., and their life-long neighbors Alana and Nathaniel Sloane. Protected by the magics of Paul's book, these four children are the only ones who remember the world as it was, who remember their family, their friends, as they used to be.

It now falls to Cody and the others to restore that world and save their loved ones; but to do that, they have to confront the Dark Woman, uncover her origins and survive the terrors she's called into being.

DeMatteis is thrilled to be working with Ploog on the project; while the two are resuming work on Abadazad, it will no longer be a standard comics-format story, so this offers the creative duo an opportunity to continue producing original comics work for readers of all ages. "I also have to mention that we've convinced the rest of the ***Abadazad*** team, colorist *Nick Bell* and letterer *Dave Lanphear*, to come along with us on this trip, and we're extremely happy about that," DeMatteis added.

Ironically, it was another former CrossGen staffer who helped cement the deal between Pruett, DeMatteis, and Ploog. ""Our first ***Abadazad*** editor, *Ian Feller*, who works with my managers at Content House these days, knew we were interested in setting this up with a company that would allow us to control the rights. He told us about Desperado, plugged us in to *Joe Pruett*, and helped put the deal together."

"They [the creators] have the same emphasis on quality as I do," Desperado's *Joe Pruett* added. "I loved ***Abadazad*** and literally jumped at the chance of getting ***Stardust Kid*** when it was offered to me. This story appeals to all ages and all personalities which is exactly what Desperado is trying to do. If I needed a feather for the cap that is Desperado Publishing, then *J.M. DeMatteis & Mike Ploog* supplied it."

"Anyone who enjoyed ***Abadazad*** will, we hope, enjoy this just as much," DeMatteis concluded. "And we hope they'll keep enjoying ***Abadazad*** when it returns as a children's book series, from Hyperion Books, in the spring of 2006. Mike and I are both committed to doing work that's totally kid-friendly, and can be equally enjoyed by adults. Ploog's incredible art alone is worth the price of admission. As for me, I've waited twenty years to do ***The Stardust Kid***—and my son's been waiting twenty years to read it!—and it's a thrill to finally see this story move from my head to the printed page."

Look for ***Stardust Kid #1*** in May.

Oh My!

It's not uncommon for children to reinvent stuffed animals as childhood friends, imbuing them with personalities that others can't discern. But what if those personalities and friendships were real?

That's the premise behind *Mike Bullock & Jack Laurence's* ***Lions, Tigers, and Bears***, a limited series debuting next month from Image Comics. The central character is young Joey Price, who discovers that the noises he hears at night aren't just figments of his imagination. Those noises come from the monstrous Beasties, who spend every night trying to "get" little children. (See—all those childhood fears you had weren't figments of your imagination after all!) Luckily for Joey, his stuffed animals are also far more real than anyone ever knew, and they've come to life to defend him from the Beastie perils.

Bullock, who had worked previously as a part of Dabel Bros. Productions' team, was unsure how comic fans would respond to his debut series. "I have to admit I was very nervous and thought we'd get little to no positive feedback, since this wasn't a superhero property and neither Jack nor I are big name creators. However, everyone we showed it to loved it and expressed interest in publishing it for us. We'd ultimately hoped to have ***Lions, Tigers and Bears*** released as an Image series, so when [Image Publisher] *Erik Larsen* made us the offer, we were ecstatic."

Bullock drew from a very familiar experience for the creation of the series—his own youth. ***Lions, Tigers, and Bears*** is inspired by "childhood and all the wondrous, magical things that occur during that period of our lives," Bullock told ***Comic Shop Newsarama's Benjamin Ong Pang Kean***. "As a child, I spent a lot of time alone and had very few toys, so quite often, I had to rely on my imagination to keep me entertained. That very same imagination is what helped carve out ***Lions, Tigers and Bears***.

"The initial concept sprang from my imagination a while back, which I then molded into what I showed Jack back in the spring. Since then, it has become a full collaboration where Jack and I just feed off of each other's ideas as we expand the Stuffed Animal Kingdom and dream up new stories to tell later on."

In the story, Grandma brings nine-year-old Joey Price a special gift before he moves to a neighboring town: four new stuffed animals — a lion, two tigers and a panther — known as The Night Patrol. Joey's normal world finds out he isn't as sure of himself as he thought he was after being transplanted from his 'comfort zone' where he grew up to a new town. The world can be scary for kids when drastic changes happen in their lives. I don't think Joey is really any different than most kids his age—he's just unnerved by the move to a new town."

So why wasn't the series called Lions, ***Tigers, and a Panther***? "Once you've read the first few issues you'll understand why the title is what it is. Bears play a *very* important role in the story. We also hope to be able to fill in a lot of the history of the Stuffed Animal Kingdom in future mini-series. If we're given the chance to continue with future series, the importance of the bears will become self-evident.

"We've already plotted out the next mini-series and Jack has already rendered an absolutely stunning cover for the first issue of that series."

Bullock and his fellow creators at RuneMaster Studios are already working on other projects, some of which have a similar all-ages feel. "Creator/writer *Wil Radcliffe* is an idea-generating machine. He's constantly telling me about this property or that property he's developing. Alongside his great book ***Noggle Stones***, which he's currently adapting into a comic book with industry vet *Ernie Colón*, Wil also has ***Monster's Crusade*** and ***The King of Fools*** in development, as well as some other things I don't know that I'm allowed to mention just yet. I'm working with another great new star-artist-in-the-making, *Theo Bain*, on ***Gimoles***... As for *Jack [Laurence*, co-creator of ***Lions, Tigers, and Bears*** and the creator of AFC's cult-fave ***Darkham Vale***], he has several new properties percolating around in that magical mind of his that we hope to showcase sometime next year."

Lions, Tigers, and Bears #1 is scheduled for mid-January release.

Donenfeld Passes

Irwin Donenfeld, former Executive Vice President and Editorial Director for DC Comics and a prime shaper of the Silver Age, passed away on November 30th at the age of 78. "Fans of the Silver Age of comics owe Irwin a debt both for his influence on DC's publishing program," *Paul Levitz*, DC's President & Publisher, said "and especially for his decision to preserve the film negatives of DC's titles—making possible the beloved ***80 Page Giant Annuals*** and ***100-Page Super-Spectaculars*** in a time when recreating or scanning comic art was prohibitively expensive."

The son of *Harry Donenfeld*, one of the founders of the publishing company that would become DC Comics, *Irwin Donenfeld* joined DC (then Detective Comics) in 1948, not long after the company's merger with sister publisher All American Comics.

As Donenfeld reminisced during a panel discussion in 2001 at Comic-Con International: San Diego, "In 1948, I was already married and had a child. I graduated from college and went up to DC and I showed them that I was a college gradu-

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ate; I had a keen intellect, and they hired me because my father was the boss."

Benjamin Howard/Comic Shop News

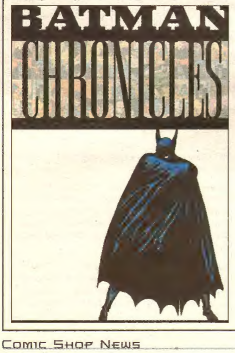
From the start, Donenfeld applied himself to two crucial sides of the industry: business and editorial. This approach began with his work with distribution, it is widely believed, when he received reports from representatives who reported the types of magazines that were selling around the country. This input guided Donenfeld to recommend that DC publish comics in those genres. In the late 1940s, with the popularity of super-heroes waning, Donenfeld led DC into more diverse genres, starting with westerns and later expanding into romance, crime, war, mystery, and science fiction. It was Donenfeld who suggested that DC launch a new title, Showcase, as a means of testing new concepts; that series served as a springboard for the Silver Age, with such series as ***Flash, Challengers of the Unknown, Lois Lane, Green Lantern, Adam Strange,*** and ***Atom*** getting their starts in its pages.

Donenfeld served as DC's Editorial Director from 1952 to 1957, overseeing the company's publishing at the start of the Silver Age of Comics. From 1958 to 1967, he was Executive Vice President and Business Manager. In 1967, DC was purchased by Kinney National Services and shortly afterwards, Donenfeld retired from comics—but his contributions influence the comics field to this day.

Book 'Em, Fan-O!

Those of you who subscribe to the "waiting for the trade" philosophy will be happy to see a heaping helping of books on DC's spring schedule. Here's a look at what's forthcoming this spring.

DC Comics
March
• ***Batman Chronicles Volume One TP*** (*Bill Finger, Gardner Fox, Bob Kane, Jerry Robinson, & Sheldon Moldoff*) - Kicking off an ongoing trade paperback series collecting Batman stories in chronological order, beginning with stories from ***Detective #s 27-37*** and ***Batman #1***
• ***Comic Cavalcade Archives Volume One HC*** (*Gardner Fox, William Marston, Bill Finger, Ted Udall, Irwin Hansen, Harry G. Peter, Frank Godwin, Sheldon Moldoff,* & others) - Reprinting the Golden Age ***Comic Cavalcade #s 1-3*** featuring Wonder Woman, Flash, Green Lantern, Wildcat, Mutt & Jeff, Hop Harrigan, and others



• ***ElfQuest Archives Volume Two HC*** (*Wendy & Richard Pini*) - Collects ***ElfQuest #s 6-10*** plus a story from ***Epic Illustrated #1***
• ***JLA: Pain of the Gods TP*** (*Chuck Austen & Ron Garney*) - Collecting JLA #s 101-106
•*Majestic: Strange New Visitor* (*Dan Abnett, Andy Lanning, Karl Kerschl, Renato Guedes, Oclair Albert, Ed McGuinness & Dexter Vines*) - Collects ***Action #811, Adventures of Superman #624, Superman #201,*** and ***Majestic #s 1-4,*** which chronicle Majestic's exploits in the DC Universe
• ***Starman: Sons of the Father TP*** (*James Robinson & Peter Snejbjerg*) - Collects ***Starman #s 75-80,*** the final issues of the series
• ***Superman: For Tomorrow Volume One HC*** (*Brian Azzarello, Jim Lee, & Scott Williams*) - Collects ***Superman #s 204-209,*** the first half of the twelve-part saga

April
• ***DC—The New Frontier Volume Two TP*** (*Darwyn Cooke*) - Collects ***DC—The New Frontier #s 4-6,*** the second half of Darwyn Cooke's Silver Age epic
• ***ElfQuest: The Grand Quest Volume Eight TP*** (*Wendy & Richard Pini* and *Joe Staton*) - Collects ***ElfQuest: Siege at Blue Mountain #s 3 & 4***
• ***Green Arrow: City Walls TP*** (*Judd Winick, Phil Hester, Ande Parks, Manuel Garcia, Steve Bird, Brian Bolland, Marcos Martin, Alvaro Lopez & Javier Rodriguez*) - Collects ***Green Arrow #s 32 & 34-39***
• ***Spirit Archives Volume 16 HC*** (*Will Eisner*) - Collecting Spirit tales from January 4th through June 27th, 1948
• ***Superman Vs. the Flash TP*** (*E. Nelson Bridwell, Geoff Johns, Dan Jurgens, Dennis O'Neil, Martin Pasko, Jim Shooter, Neal Adams, Dan Adkins, Murphy Anderson, Ross Andru, Rick Burchett, Dick Dillin, Mike Esposito, José Luis García-López, Joe Giella, Carmine Infantino, Dan Jurgens, George Klein, Kevin Nowlan, Bob Oksner, Prentis Rollins, Curt Swan & Art Thiberl*) - Collects fast-paced adventures from ***Adventures of Superman #463, DC Comics Presents #s 1 & 2, DC First: Flash/Superman #1, Flash #175, Superman #199, and World's Finest #s 198-199***

WildStorm
March
• ***Promethea Book Four TP*** (*Alan Moore,J.H. Williams III ,& Mick Gray*) - Collects ***Promethea #s 19-25***
• ***Planetary Volume Three: Leaving the Twentieth Century TP*** (*Warren Ellis & John Cassaday*) - Collects ***Planetary #s 13-18***

April
• ***The Authority: Kev TP*** (*Garth Ennis, Glen Fabry*) - Collects ***The Authority: Kev Special*** and ***The Authority: More Kev #s 1-4***
• ***Tom Strong's Terrific Tales Volume Two HC*** (*Alan Moore, Steve Moore, Arthur Adams, Peter Bagge, Steve Leialoha, Michael Wm. Kaluta, Peter Kuper, Shawn McManus, Kevin Nowlan, Jason Pearson, Andrew Pepoy, Bruce Timm, Alan Weiss, & Chris Weston*) - Collects ***Tom Strong's Terrific Tales #s 7-12***

Vertigo
March
• ***Fables: The Mean Seasons TP*** (*Bill Willingham, Mark Buckingham, Steve Leialoha, Tony Akins, Jimmy Palmiotti, & James Jean*) - Collects ***Fables #s 22 & 28-30***
Collects issues #22 and 28-33
$14.99 U.S., 160 pages

April
• ***Bite Club TP*** (*Howard Chaykin, David Tischman, David Hahn, & Frank Quitely*) - Collects the six-issue limited series

CMX
March
• ***The Devil Does Exist Volume One*** (*Takanashi Mitsuba*)
• ***Monster Collection Volume One*** (*Tsubuka Sakura*)
• ***Sword of the Dark Ones Volume One*** (*Kotobuki Tsukasa & Yasui Kentaro*)

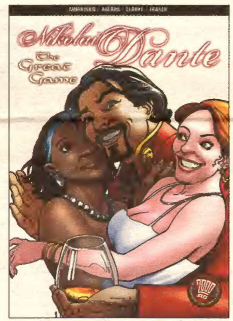
April
• ***Madara Volume Three*** (*Tajima Sho-u & Otsuka Eiji*)
• ***From Eroica With Love Volume Three*** (*Aoike Yasuko*)
• ***Land of the Blindfolded Volume Three*** (*Tsukuba Sakura*)
• ***Phantom Thief Jeannie Volume One*** (*Tanamura Arina*)
• ***Tenryuo: The Dragon Cycle Volume One*** (*Matoh Sanami*)

Humanoids
March
• ***Miss Better Living Through Crime TP*** (*Philippe Thirault, Marc Riou, & Mark Vigourous*)
• ***Fragile TP*** (*Stefano Raffaele*)
• ***El Nino TP*** (*Christian Perissin & Boro Pavlovic*)

2000AD
March
• ***Judge Dredd: Dredd Vs. Death TP*** (*John Wagner, Alan Grant, & Brian Bolland*) - Collecting the most famous Judge Dredd story arc ever
• ***Nikolai Dante: The Great Game TP*** (*Robbie Morrison, Charles Adlard, Andy Clarke, & Simon Fraser*)
• ***Slaine: Warrior's Dawn TP*** (*Pat Mills, Angie Kincaid, Massimo Belardinelli, & Mike McMahon*)

April
• ***Robo-Hunters: Day of the Droids TP*** (*John Wagner & Ian Gibson*)
• ***Strontium Dog: The Early Cases TP*** (*John Wagner, Alan Grant, & Carlos Ezquerra*)
• ***Thirteen TP*** (*Mike Carey & Andy Clarke*)

Mad
March
• ***Mad About the Nineties TP***



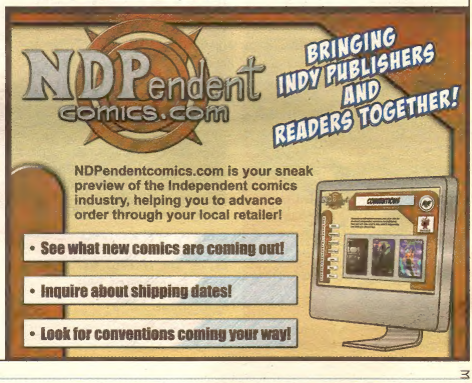
Ins & Outs

Out! ***JLA Classified #1*** and ***Space Ghost #1,,*** both of which sold out of their first printings in mid-November. "You can't go wrong with two powerhouse creators like *Grant Morrison & Ed McGuinness* on JLA," says *Dan DiDio*, DC's VP - Executive Editor, DCU. "And *Joe Kelly & Ariel Olivetti* have given Space Ghost the heroic treatment the character has always deserved." No word yet on any possibilities of a second printing for either book.

In! Artists *Mark Brooks, Michael Ryan,* and *Tom Raney,* as well as colorists Morry Hollowell and Frank D'Armata, all of whom have signed exclusives with Marvel.The big surprise of the bunch was Raney, formerly the artist on Outsiders during his exclusive tenure with DC. Raney will be working on a few issues of ***Uncanny X-Men*** prior to the unveiling of his next major project; Ryan will continue with ***New X-Men: Academy X;*** Brooks will contribute to an upcoming ***Amazing Spider-Man*** arc as well as the 2005 ***Age of Apocalypse*** event; and Lopresti will continue with ***Excalibur.***

Out! ***Darkstalkers #1,*** which sold out of its impressive overprinting only days after its release. With interest still strong in the title, Devil's Due is shipping a second printing of the book in mid-December. "We are delighted that there is such a demand for a project that has been a true labor of love for the whole team," creator *Erik Ko* said. "Considering that *Darkstalkers's* strong appeal is not limited to ***Street Fighter*** and videogame fans, but anime and horror fans as well, we knew that the new series would garner a lot of interest. We were, however, caught off-guard with how much of an impact the cross-promotion with the new game and store/print ads would have."

In! ***The Champions,*** which is the next Heroic Publishing series making its return as the publisher re-enters the comics field. *Tales of the Champions #1,* by *Wilson Hill & Chris Marrinan,* reintroduces readers to the superheroes and the teenage boy who controls their fates; look for it in late June.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Top Two-Dozen for January

Beyond Avalon #1

Joe Pruett (W)| Goran Sudzuka (A)
(Image NOV041525 $2.95)

What's the Scoop?
Megan, the daughter of Arthur, leaves the safety of the enchanted isle of Avalon in search of her missing father.

Why Should You Care?
A strong female lead character... lush, detailed, and elegant artwork... an epic quest... classical fantasy overtones... this is a series with CrossGen written all over it—but no sigils make it accessible to all!

Breach #1

Bob Harras (W)| Marcos Martin & Alvaro Lopez (A)
(DC NOV040266 $2.95)

What's the Scoop?
A devoted military officer is virtually destroyed—and then reborn—as the result of a secret experiment gone awry. Now he relies on a containment suit to help him harness his incredible abilities as he tries to find his rightful place in a world that seems almost foreign to him.

Why Should You Care?
Bob Harras, Marvel's editor-in-chief during much of the 90's, makes his debut at DC with a new character initially created as a revamped Captain Atom before Harras took him to another level.

Blood Stained Sword #1

Dan Wickline (W)| Ben Templesmith (A)
(IDW NOV042755 $7.49)

What's the Scoop?
In a nihilistic future, an honor-conscious Samurai seeks to clear his dead father's sullied name—and the quest takes him to decadent Seattle, where corporations have sacrificed integrity for income.

Why Should You Care?
Samurai meets science fiction in this edgy drama illustrated by the incomparable *Ben Templesmith*.

Clive Barker's Thief of Always Vol 1

Kris Oprisko (W)| Gabriel Hernandez (A)
(IDW NOV042748 $7.49)

What's the Scoop?
Mr. Hood's Holiday House seems like such an inviting place—a special realm where children are surrounded by treats as their dreams come true. But what price must be paid?...

Why Should You Care?
After several years away from the comics field, *Clive Barker* is back as IDW presents its first Barker adaptation of a tale that combines ***Peter Pan*** and *Needful Things*.

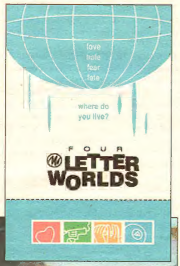
presented in this compelling series spotlighting real-world heroism.

Why Should You Care?
Embedded journalist *Karl Zinsmeister* lets readers see what really happened during the Battle for Iraq. No superpowers, no larger-than-life adventurers—just the most human of all heroes.

Four Letter Worlds GN

Various (W/A)
(Image NOV041533 $12.95)

What's the Scoop?
Fate. Fear. Love. Hate. Four letter words... but within them can be found an infinite number of stories. Since the printing bill for an infinite number of stories is prohibitive, though, Image is picking sixteen memorable tales by twenty-six creators for this original anthology.



Why Should You Care?
Last summer's Flight proved that the theme anthology is alive and well, so Image is back at it, enlisting the aid of such top talents as *Joe Casey, Chynna Clugston-Major, Scott More, Phil Hester, and Andi Watson*, to name a few.

Combat Zone: True Tales of GI's in Iraq #1

Karl Zinsmeister (W)| Dan Jurgens (A)
(Marvel NOV041776 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?
Three months in the lives of America's most revered modern warriors, the 82nd Airborne, are

Freedom Force #1

Eric Dieter (W)| Tom Scioli (A)
(Image NOV041534 $2.95)

What's the Scoop?
Mentor, Minuteman, El Diablo, and Man-Bot hunt down Soviet super-spy Nuclear Winter in order to save Patriot City from atomic destruction. If *Tom Clancy* had written for Marvel in 1962, this would be it!

Why Should You Care?
The hit game inspired by comic books makes its comic book debut in this Image title that features appropriately Kirby-esque art by ***Myth of Opus 8*** creator *Tom Scioli*.

Futurama Simpsons: Crossover Crisis Part 2 #1

Ian Boothby (W)| James Lloyd (A)
(Bongo NOV042510 $2.99)

What's the Scoop?
The entire city of Springfield is somehow transported to New York a thousand years in the future. So how does the scientifically advanced world of a distant tomorrow treat its ancient visitors? It makes them all slaves, of course—ain't that the science fiction thing to do?

Why Should You Care?
Now that Fox has dropped ***Futurama*** from its lineup (like they had better shows to replace it!...), this is the only way you can get a new helping of Groening-inspired lunacy! And even Fox didn't deliver anything as zany as this crossover!

Green Lantern: Rebirth #4

Geoff Johns (W)| Ethan Van Sciver (A)
(DC NOV040272 $2.95)

What's the Scoop?
Bad news for the DC Universe: Parallax is back. Bad news for Parallax: the JLA, the JSA, the Teen Titans, Guy Gardner, John Stewart, and Kilowog are on the scene. Oh, and there's that Hal Jordan guy, too...

Why Should You Care?
The reformation of one of the greatest heroes of the DC Universe continues in this can't-miss series that leads up to ***Green Lantern's*** relaunch in 2005.

GRIMJACK: KILLER INSTINCT #1

JOHN OSTRANDER (W)/ TIM TRUMAN (A)
(IDW NOV042749 $3.99; also available in a signed edition (NOV042648 $39.99))

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?
Grimjack's the target of a vampire assassin, and the fate of Munden's Bar—the nexus of all realities—is on the line. In other words, it's business as usual in Cynosure after all these years!

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?
John Ostrander & Tim Truman have overcome the most perfidious of all villains—the American legal system—to bring back this almost legendary character in a series of all-new adventures. Sometimes justice does triumph!

HELLBLAZER: ALL HIS ENGINES

MIKE CAREY (W)/ LEONARDO MANCO (A)
(Vertigo/DC OCT040358 $24.95)

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?
When a mysterious worldwide plague puts millions of people into deadly comas—including the grandchild of a friend—Earth's foremost expert on the bizarre, John Constantine, steps in with the 'cure.' But the situation gets far more ocmplex when Constantine discovers a mad demon in a body woven out of cancer cells; a plot to build franchised Hells in the cities of men, and a threat to unleash a plague of coma cases stretching from London to L.A. Can Constantine put the good of one ahead of the fate of billions?

INCREDIBLE HULK #77

PETER DAVID (W)/ LEE WEEKS (A)
(NOV041603 $2.99)

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?
The Hulk takes a turn towards the Shakespearean in "Tempest Fugit" as he finds himself washed up on a strange island populated by other castaways... and a few unexpected monsters!

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?
It's not the Shakespeare thing that's going to thrill readers of *Incredible Hulk*—it's the *Peter David* thing! That's right, the character's most popular writer is back! For how long? Don't ask—just enjoy the moment!

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?
With the *Constantine* film propelling *Hellblazer* into the spotlight, lots of new readers are going to be looking for a convenient jumping-on point to this complex long-running series—and what better solution is there than a standalone graphic novel that draws newcomers into Constantine's dark, twisted world?

IRREGULARS VOL 1 TP

STEVEN-ELLIOT ALTMAN & MICHAEL REAVES (W)/ BONG DAZO (A)
(Dark Horse OCT040039 $12.95)

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?
A string of grisly murders in Whitechapel appears to be the work of one man—Doctor John Watson! If Holmes hopes to prove his old friend innocent, he'll need the help of the Baker Street Irregulars... but he may need even more than that, since it appears that evil of a Lovecraftean nature is also involved...

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?
Two best-selling authors bring together the fictional creations of two of the most popular writers of the past century and a quarter in this original graphic novel that blends Doyle & Lovecraft.

LIONS, TIGERS, & BEARS #1

MIKE BULLOCK (W)/ JACK LAWRENCE (A)
(Image NOV041536 $2.95)

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?
A young boy struggling to find his place in a new home and a new town finds that he has four allies: a quartet of stuffed animals known as the Night Pride. But these aren't just any stuffed animals...

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?
Jack Lawrence, creator of *Darkham Vale*, ventures into Herobear & the Kid territory with this magical all-ages series.

MAJESTIC #1

DAN RENETT & ANDY LANNING (W)/ NEIL GOOGE (A)
(WildStorm/DC NOV040316 $2.95)

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?
In his last miniseries, he was a Stranger in a Strange Land, trapped in the DC Universe. But now he's going home—and he's taking Superman and the Eradicator with him!

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?
Once a WildStorm hero has confronted the ethical standards of the DC Universe's iconic Man of Steel, does it make him a better man? Find out in this culture-shock homecoming..

NEW AVENGERS #3

BRIAN BENDIS (W)/ DAVID FINCH (A)
(Marvel NOV041792 $2.25)

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?
The reinvention of the Avengers continues as Captain America decides to make his motley crew of heroes a permanent team. But who's willing to sign up—and where will these Avengers assemble?

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?
The JLA-ing of *The Avengers* continues, with Spidey and Wolverine upping the star status of the team, while Bendis & Finch up the star status of the creative roster.

NIGHTWING #101

CHUCK DIXON & SCOTT BEATTY (W)| SCOTT MCDANIEL & ANDY OWENS (A)
(DC NOV040244 $2.25)

NIGHTWING #102

CHUCK DIXON & SCOTT BEATTY (W)| SCOTT MCDANIEL & ANDY OWENS (A)
(DC NOV040245 $2.25)

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?
How did Dick Grayson make the transition from Robin to Nightwing? Find out in this six-part story that offers a look into a hitherto-unexplored facet of the hero's journey.

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?
The *Nightwing* dream team unites to present a long-overdue "Year One" focusing on one of the most dramatic character transitions in Bat-history.

SPIDER MAN HUMAN TORCH #1

DAN SLOTT (W)| TY TEMPLETON (A)
(Marvel NOV041769 $2.99)

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?
This five-issue series focuses on five memorable meetings from Marvel history involving Spidey and the Torch, ranging from their first adventures early in their career to their modern-day dealings.

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?
Dan Slott, who blends humor and adventure on a regular basis in the pages of *She-Hulk*, captures the exuberance of the Silver Age in this five-parter—and *any* series featuring art by *Ty Templeton* is cause for celebration!

SUPERMAN #213

BRIAN AZZARELLO (W)| JIM LEE & SCOTT WILLIAMS (A)
(DC NOV040250 $2.50)

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?
Superman comes face-to-face with the being—or beings—responsible for the disappearance of millions...including the Man of Steel himself!

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?
Thanks to *Identity Crisis*, figuring out whodunnit has become a very popular game among comic fans, so this is going to be a must-read for any Super-fan.

SUPERMAN BATMAN #17

JEPH LOEB (W)| CARLOS PACHECO & JESUS MERINO (A)
(DC NOV040253 $2.95)

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?
What's happened to Bruce Wayne? How will the world get by without a Batman? And what part do Ra's al Ghul, Sgt. Rock, and the Haunted Tank play in all of this?

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?
Jeph Loeb has made *Superman/Batman* the best-selling book of 2004 with his unpredictable, high-octane plot-driven storytelling, and this story arc is no exception. And once you see *Carlos Pacheco's* stunning art, you'll know why he's considered one of the best in the biz! Add the irresistible appeal of an alternate-reality storyline and you have a must-read.

SUPERMAN: STRENGTH #1

SCOTT MCCLOUD (W)| ALUIR AMANCIO & TERRY AUSTIN (A)
(DC NOV040255 $5.95; also available in a signed edition (NOV042645 $29.99)

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?
Strength can be measured in many ways—physically, philosophically, mentally, and ethically, for instance. This three-issue prestige-format series reveals how a young Clark Kent became a true Superman, coming to terms with the responsibilities—and boundaries—that his adoptive parents set for him.

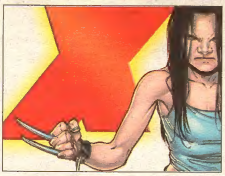
WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?
Scott McCloud, acclaimed creator of *Understanding Comics*, adds to the Superman mythos with this series—and with *Alex Ross* supplying the cover art, there's no chance of this one slipping past you on the stands!

ULTIMATES 2 #2

MARK MILLAR (W)| BRYAN HITCH (A)
(Marvel NOV041765 $2.99)

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?
Now the whole world knows that Bruce Banner is the Hulk—and they know that the government and the Ultimates have withheld that information from the public.
How does that affect the public's perception of these heroes?

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?
Millar & Hitch explore the real world ramifications of superhero action in this series—and the results are entertaining and thought-provoking.



X-23 #1

Craig Kyle & Christopher Yost(W)| Billy Tan (A)

(Marvel NOV041762 $2.99; also available in a signed edition (NOV042656 $19.99))

What's the Scoop?

Who is X-23? Where did she come from? What's her link to Wolverine? The answers can be found in this limited series!

Why Should You Care?

The most popular new mutant of the 21st Century graduates to her own limited series... and it's about time!

X-Men:Phoenix: Endsong #1

Greg Pak (W)| Greg Land (A)

(Marvel NOV041759 $2.99; also available in a signed edition (NOV042651 $19.99))

What's the Scoop?

The death of Jean Grey doesn't mean the end of the Phoenix Force, as the X-Men discovers when Phoenix returns to Earth looking for the only human host capable of dealing with the incredible power. So what happens when the Phoenix Force learns that Jean Grey is no more?

Why Should You Care?

You can't keep a good Phoenix down, can you? And once you see *Greg Land's* X-art, you're going to wonder why Marvel hasn't put him on a core X-title already!

Movies Worth Reading

Constantine Movie Adaptation

(Vertigo/DC NOV040328 $6.95)

Constantine Movie Prop Replica: The Shotgun

(DC Direct NOV040363 $350.00)

Constantine Movie Statue: Keanu Reeves as Constantine

(DC Direct NOV040364 $195.00)

Constantine: The Hellblazer Collection TP

(Vertigo/DC NOV040329 $14.95)

Elektra: Movie TP

(Marvel NOV041832 $13.99)

When comics become films, it's only appropriate that the films should become comics—and that's just what's happening here. Steven T. Seagle, Ron Randall, & Jimmy Palmiotti adapt the Keanu Reeves film starring the Vertigo antihero, while Sean McKeever & Mike Perkins do the honors on the Jennifer Garner film. Both adaptations are available in trade paperbacks that supplement the film-to-comics story with selected highlights from the characters' comic book careers. DC Direct also has a pair of distinctive film-related collectibles for the upscale collector: a statue depicting Keanu Reeves as John Constantine and a replica of the shotgun that Constantine uses in the film, complete with a pair of demonic hands to serve as a display. And don't miss the original standalone graphic novel *All His Engines* by *Mike Carey & Leonardo Manco*, also slated for release to coincide with the film's debut.

Check 'Em Out! Books You Should Be Reading

24 Stories

(IDW NOV042754 $7.49)

You think Jack Bauer's life is tough enough on the television series!... Well, the troubles continue in this original oneshot that pits the CTU agent against a drug cartel, Chechen separatists, and an international hostage scheme. With the fourth season of the television series beginning at about the same time as this comic hits the stands, it's a must-read for fans of the Fox series.

Hawkman #36

(DC NOV040269 $2.50)

New artists *Joe Bennett & Ruy Jose* join writers *Justin Gray & Jimmy Palmiotti* to kick off a storyline that ups the misery quotient in Hawkman & Hawkgirl's life a great deal. Deadman guest-stars in the new creative team's kickoff issue, which pits the allies against a zombie menace.

Two Bits #1

(Image NOV041549 25¢)

For only 12.5¢ per preview, you can sample two upcoming all-ages Image titles by *Mike S. Miller & Hector Sevilla*. In a time where it's almost impossible to find any form of entertainment that costs only two bits, how can you pass this one up?

Hot Commodities: January's Hottest Merchandising & Collectibles

Alex Ross JLA Oversized Poster

(DC Direct JUL040716 $19.95)

The World's Greatest Super-Heroes come together in this beautifully illustrated, oversized (almost five feet wide!), horizontal, full-color poster painted by fan-favorite painter *Alex Ross*.

Batman Hush Series 3: Commissioner Gordon Action Figure

(DC Direct OCT040374 $19.99)

Batman Hush Series 3: Ra's al Ghul Action Figure

(DC Direct OCT040375 $19.99)

Batman Hush Series 3: Scarecrow Action Figure

(DC Direct OCT040376 $19.99)

Batman Hush Series 3: Stealth Jumper Batman Action Figure

(DC Direct OCT040373 $19.99)

Here come four new additions to the line of action figures inspired by the *Jeph Loeb-Jim Lee-Scott Williams* saga. Each captures the distinctive look of Lee's art, thanks to the skills of sculptor *Tim Bruckner*.

Classic Comic Characters Statue #1: Hellboy

(Dark Horse SEP040162 $49.95)

Classic Comic Book Characters Statue #2: Conan

(Dark Horse OCT040087 $49.95)

Craig Yoe, the artist responsible for Dark Horse's cult-fave line of retro-statues depicting classic comic strip characters, turns his attention to modern comics stars with the first two in a series of syrocco-styled sculpts depicting comic book characters. The first statue is based on Mignola's monster-fighter, while the second captures the look of the classic 1970's Conan. Each statue is packaged in a special litho-printed full-color tin box; includes a vintage-style pinback button, and booklet about the character and his creator.

Joseph Michael Linsner Dawn 12" Statue

(Diamond Select SEP043688 $199.99)

The latest statue in the series depicting Joseph Michael Linsner's sensuous creation is sculpted by Gabriel Marquez.

Supergirl Statue

(DC Direct JUL040707 $195.00)

Designed by Michael Turner, sculpted by ", this statue measures approximately 10" tall and is inspired by the best-selling *Jeph Loeb-Michael Turner* **Superman/Batman** story arc that reintroduced Supergirl to the DC Universe.

Read All About It: Must-Have Additions to Your Reference Library

Alter Ego #44

(TwoMorrows NOV043080 $5.95)

Spotlighting the JSA, All-Star Squadron, and Infinity, Inc.

Charlton Spotlight Magazine #1

(Argo NOV043082 $6.95)

The first issue of this Charlton-focused magazine offers a tribute to the recently-deceased artist Pat Boyette.

Mort Walker: Conversations TP

(University Press of Mississippi NOV043194 $20.00)

Spotlighting the acclaimed cartoonist.

Collected Cool: January's Best Reprint Volumes

Essential Peter Parker: The Spectacular Spider-Man Vol 1 TP

(Marvel NOV041845 $16.99)

Collecting ***Peter Parker, Spectacular Spider-Man #1-31.***

Legend of Grimjack Vol 1 S&N HC

(IDW NOV042752 $50.00)

Legend of Grimjack Vol 1 TP

(IDW NOV042751 $19.99)

Presenting the entire ***GrimJack*** saga, in order, starting off with the classic stories from First Comics' *StarSlayer*, issues 10 through 18, by *John Ostrander and Timothy Truman*. The perfect complement to the first issue of the new Ostrander-Truman ***Grimjack*** series, also debuting this month.

Marvel Visionaries: Stan Lee HC

(Marvel NOV041836 $29.99)

Featuring an assortment of tales spanning Stan's multi-decades-long career.

Seven Soldiers of Victory Archives Vol 1 HC

(DC NOV040289 $49.95)

Collecting the Golden Age ***Leading Comics #1-4***, featuring the adventures of The Seven Soldiers of Victory: The Crimson Avenger, Green Arrow, the Shining Knight The Vigilante, Speedy, Stripesy and the Star-Spangled Kid.

Negative Burn: Very Best from 1993-1998 TP

(Image NOV041537 $19.95)

Joe Pruett assembles the very best from the first 50 issues of this prestigious anthology and presents them all together here in a Desperado edition for the first time; includes material by *Neil Gaiman, Brian Bolland, Alan Moore, P. Craig Russell, Dave Johnson, Dave Gibbons, Evan Dorkin, Phil Hester, Arthur Adams, Edvin Biukovic, Bob Burden, Zender Cannon, Mark Chiarello, Guy Davis, Michael Gaydos, Danijel Zezelj, Darko Macan, Mike Wieringo, Terry Moore, Paul Pope, Andreu Robinson, Jim Mahfood*, and more.

Vaughn Bode: Rare and Well Done Vol 1 TP

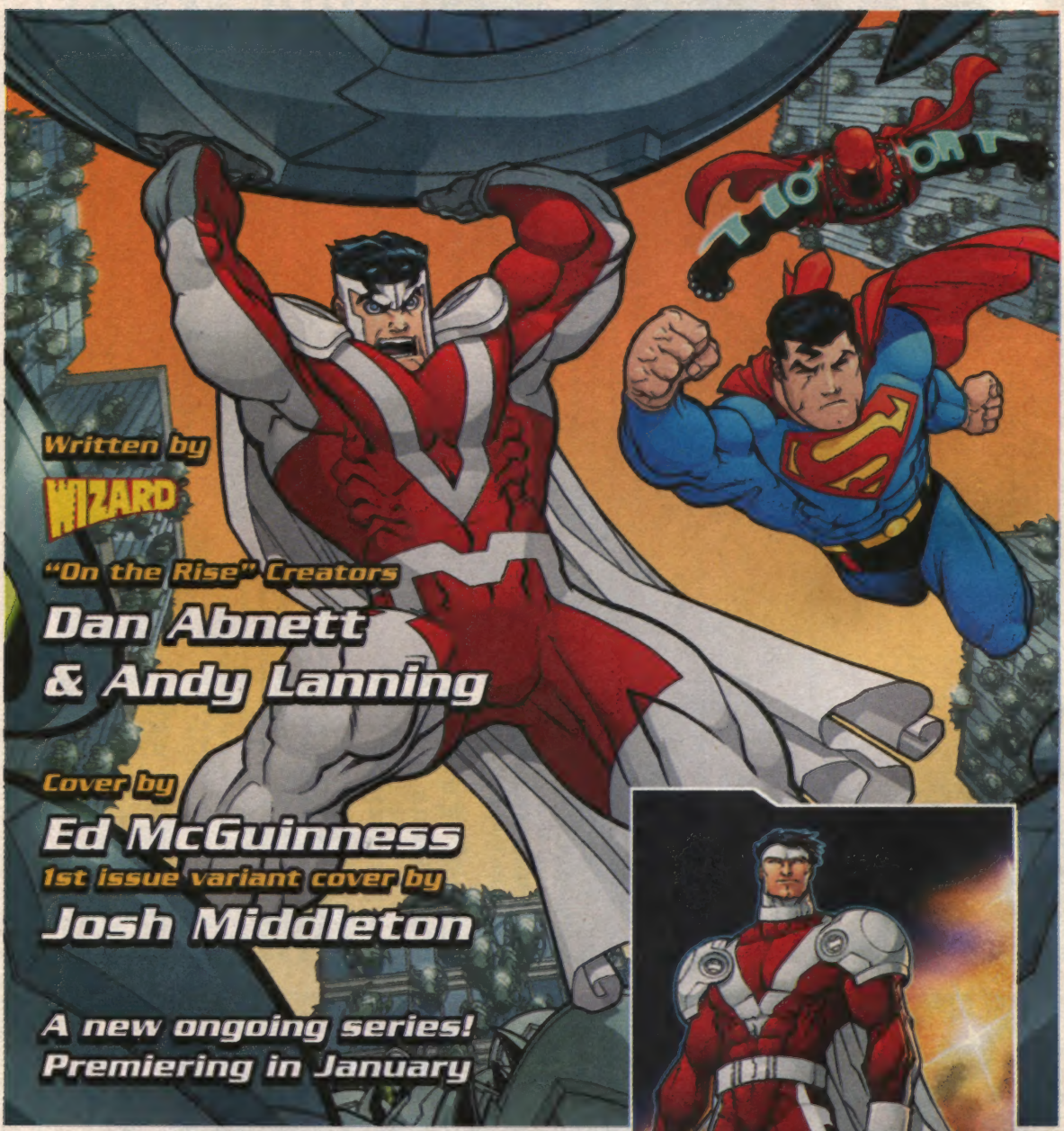
(Pure Imagination NOV042856 $19.95)

120 pages of Bode's rarest art, including his complete run on 'If' and 'Galaxy,' rare fanzine works, and early advertisements, and previously unpublished works.

Back in his own universe...

...but is he too late to save it?!

MAJESTIC™



Written by

WIZARD

"On the Rise" Creators

Dan Abnett & Andy Lanning

Cover by

Ed McGuinness

1st issue variant cover by

Josh Middleton

A new ongoing series!
Premiering in January

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and inks by **TREVOR SCOTT**

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